



Beyond Basics Newsletter

December 16, 2010

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Destiny of a Child

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New This Week

[Fox 2 News Visits Thirkell](#)

[Partnering with IMU](#)

[Gift of Reading Program](#)

[Did You Know?](#)



Watch Beyond Basics On 50PlusPrime

If you missed our segment on Fox 2 News Detroit, you can watch it on the 50PlusPrime web site, [here](#)



Beyond Basics Open House Thursday, January 13 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Please join us for a tour of two Beyond Basics Schools Mae C. Jemison and Thirkell Elementary, where you can see our programs in operation.

To RSVP or for questions please email [Sharla](#) or call 248-250-9304

Let's Hear from One of Our Tutors



Tutor Gieric Laput and student Sharif

In my first few days with Beyond Basics, my primary goal was direct instruction in the various components of reading to my students. I thought of myself as a pitcher, pouring volumes of tricks in phonics and comprehension to an empty cup.

However, as weeks progressed, I have realized other dimensions to this great opportunity of being a reading tutor. One student in particular made me realize that sometimes, the learner can be an active producer of ideas. While working on the Silent E rule, he was able to devise a strategy of remembering how the silent e signals long vowel sounds based from a previous reading of the book Three Little Pigs. His analogy was that the silent e "acts like the big, bad wolf that blows the consonant away [straw house], for the vowel letter [little pig] to howl," thus producing the long sound. I was so impressed I could not remember how many high fives were exchanged throughout the session.

I've come to appreciate these tiny steps as major victories that mean so much to the lives of my students. Moreover, I have slowly discovered that being a tutor, is in fact, a humble, cooperative form of art. It is not one-way, but bidirectional. It is not passive, but an active, engaging process. Now, I see myself as an equal and humble part of the cup.

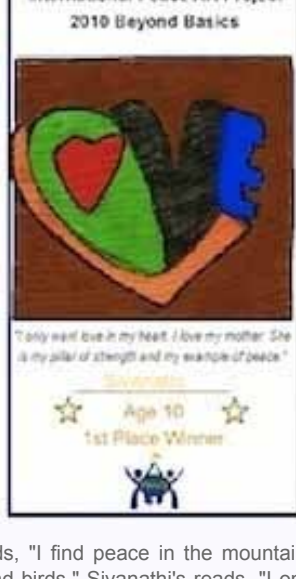
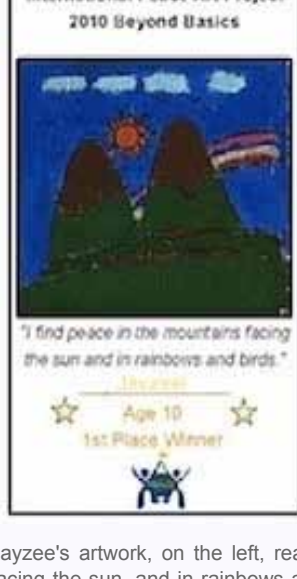
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Dear Friends and Supporters of Beyond Basics,

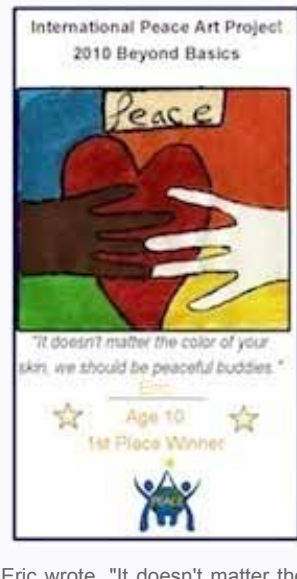
The holidays are a season of peace and thankfulness, and it's in that spirit that we conduct our annual [International Writing Project](#) and the International Peace Art Project. The projects bring together local school children and their counterparts from East London, South Africa and Hyderabad, India.



Jayzee's artwork, on the left, reads, "I find peace in the mountains facing the sun, and in rainbows and birds." Sivanathi's reads, "I only want love in my heart. I love my mother. She is my pillar of strength and my example of peace."

The art project asked kids to portray what peace meant to them. Their responses are both thoughtful and poignant, and occasionally serve to remind us of the small blessings that make life fulfilling. The artwork depicted above, from two South African children, are great examples of this.

Detroit kids also participated in the art project. Two of the winners are shown below.



Eric wrote, "It doesn't matter the color of your skin, we should be peaceful buddies." William wrote, "When birds are flying when no one is around they fly in peace."

In the writing project this year, we asked kids to tell us what they are thankful for. Among the best of the entries were these from Detroit students:



Left: Fifth grader Brianna wrote, "When I come to Thirkell I am thankful to have a nice teacher and to get a good education." Mone'a, also in the fifth grade, wrote, "I am thankful to God because he created people to build schools for children." Right: Janiah and Alithia with a Beyond Basics volunteer. Alithia, a fourth grader, wrote, "I am thankful for my school and my family. I love doing math, science, music and reading."

We are thankful for each of you and the many wonderful ways you support our work helping children throughout the year. A very Happy Holiday to all!

Sincerely,

Pamela Good
Executive Director
Beyond Basics

Fox 2 News Visits Thirkell Reading Program

Fox 2 News visited Thirkell Elementary School recently to interview Executive Director Pamela Good and to observe the Beyond Basics program in action. The segment aired on December 8, and featured Read to Rise tutoring, the Publishing Center and the volunteer Reading Buddies program.



Executive Director Pamela Good interviews a student while tutor Gieric Laput looks on.

The segment was hosted by Fox 2 News Special Reporter Tony Fama. It can be seen on his 50PlusPrime web site, [here](#).



Volunteers in the Publishing Center and the Reading Buddies programs help Thirkell students with their literacy.

Photos by Danyelle Manley



Beyond Basics Partners with IMU



Beyond Basics and IMU (I Miss You) have partnered to influence middle school students at Mae C. Jemison Academy. This unique mentor program will allow selected students to travel to the University of Michigan once a month. Students will be engaged in a variety of activities and discussions during their trips. Professors and students will offer encouragement during different workshops and activities. Our hope is to impress upon them the importance of education and provide strategies to help them reach their goals.



Photos by DeShon Taylor

Gift of Reading Program Nears Its Goal; There's Still Time to Volunteer

More than 22,000 books have been collected for the Detroit Free Press's Gift of Reading program, and will be given out to Detroit Public School students in grades preK-3 during the holiday break. The total is 3,000 books from the goal, however, an additional 10,000 books have been requested by local Head Start programs.



There is still time to become a volunteer for Beyond Basics as we augment the program. Already 90 people have volunteered, but we need more. If you are interested in helping in this effort, please download the attached [file](#) and then contact Sharla Stabile at stabile@beyondbasics.org. The file also contains information on book dropoff locations and donation options.

Did You Know?

Getting kids more involved in classroom lessons can be as easy as randomly selecting which ones answer questions. According to professor Dylan William, a British education expert, most classroom questions are answered by the same 25% of students, while others tune out. Randomizing responses can be done by drawing students' names from a hat, or other similar method, and tends to keep kids engaged, since they don't know when they might be called upon. For the full story, go [here](#).

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